



Arkansas Broadband Advisory Council

MEETING MINUTES AUGUST 26, 2008

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ed Allis
AT&T

Greg Ashcraft
South Arkansas
Telephone Company

Dave Burdick
Pine Bluff Jefferson
County Library
System

Maryce Cunningham
Suddenlink
Communications

Jim Dailey
Flake & Kelley
Commercial

John Dreher
CenturyTel

Larry Frazier
Rural Telcom
Solutions

Joe Molinaro
Arkansas Cable
Telecommunications
Association

Len Pitcock
Cox Communications

Wendy Wheeler
Alltel
Communications

James Winningham
Arkansas Insurance
Department

Meeting was called to order by James Winningham at 9:35 a.m.
at the office of the Arkansas Capital Corp.

1. Roll call

In attendance:

Greg Ashcraft	Joe Molinaro
Dave Burdick	Len Pitcock
Maryce Cunningham	Wendy Wheeler
Jim Dailey	James Winningham

Absent:

Ed Allis
John Dreher

Also in attendance:

Elizabeth Bowles, WISPA
Leslie Lane, Connect Arkansas
Ethan Schwartz, Connect Arkansas
Kim Tran, Connect Arkansas
Emerson Evans, Connect Arkansas

2. Introduction of new Council members and first time visitors
 - Larry Frazier, Rural Telcom Solutions – new Council member
 - Emerson Evans, Connect Arkansas – new hire with considerable mapping experience
3. Review of minutes from previous meeting
 - Minutes were approved.
 - Dave Burdick moved
 - Jim Dailey seconded

James reported on his discussion with the Attorney General's office and with the legal staff of the office of the Governor regarding Act 604 re: the make-up of ABAC membership.

a. Considerations include:

- 1) Act 604 is not clearly worded.
- 2) Some items are spelled out in the act; while others are intended.
- 3) Inclusion of additional organizations is not spelled out in the Act, but appears to be consistent with its intent

b. Facts appear to support the inclusion of WISPA and other organizations that represent broadband providers, whether or not they are headquartered in the state and/or serve only the state of Arkansas.

c. Jim Dailey moved that a WISPA representative be included on ABAC. Dave Burdick seconded. ABAC members voted unanimously to accept WISPA.

d. Elizabeth Bowles will join the board

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4. Annual election of Chair and Secretary
 - a. Wendy suggested that we defer the vote until the next meeting so that the ABAC members have an opportunity to nominate themselves and/or other members for these positions.
 - b. Maryce will send out an email requesting these nominations.
5. Connect Arkansas Update
 - a. Budget
 - 1) 2008 - funding has been received.
 - 2) 2009 – funding requests have been submitted to USDA, state , and private sector funding sources. Responses have been encouraging that additional funding may be received from each of these sources.
 - b. Mapping
 - 1) Using the California report style of mapping – availability and speed – which has been approved by the Connect Arkansas board
 - 2) Emerson Evans has joined Connect Arkansas. His mapping experience should help the process to move along more quickly.
 - 3) Drafts of first maps are expected by November.
 - c. Contacting broadband providers
 - 1) 79 broadband providers have been identified in Arkansas.
 - 2) 31 NDAs have been signed and returned.
 - 3) 27 NDA's are being reviewed by corporate legal departments.
 - 4) 21 companies on Connect Arkansas' calendar for meetings to review the NDA.
 - d. Community Outreach
 - 1) Using the North Carolina templates and tools.
 - 2) Identifying state universities to help organize the community events.
 - 3) Four counties have been identified to date: Desha, Woodruff, Columbia, and Crawford
 - 4) Activities have begun in Desha County.
 - 5) Other counties have approached Connect Arkansas and requested inclusion.
 - e. Surveys
 - 1) Phone survey has been completed with 608 respondents
 - 2) Results, which are extremely similar to the finding in other states, include:
 - a) Uptake rate is not as high as providers would like.
 - b) 42% of those surveyed subscribe to Internet service.
 - c) 48% of those surveyed don't subscribe to Internet service.
 - d) Southwest and Northeast parts of state have lowest percentages of subscribers.
 - e) 29% of those surveyed have never used the Internet.
 - f) 50% of those surveyed use the Internet at least once a week.
 - g) Responses to question as to why they do not subscribe to Internet service:
 - 27% - "don't need"
 - 8% - "isn't available"
 - 4%- "not affordable"
 - f.. Other areas included in current focus:
 - 1) Preparing for upcoming legislative session.
 - 2) Setting budgets for 2009.
 - g. Other matters

Wendy suggested several aspects of the state mapping that should be consider; i.e., speed usually varying and should, therefore, be described as "up to"; several maps be provided to show 384 today and FCC's required speed today, as well as potential future speeds.

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6. Status of AG contact regarding a definition for an Act 605 Arkansas broadband provider association (See above)
7. Question for discussion: “Could the minimum population density for providing profitable broadband service be lowered if the provider’s revenue were based on services consumed rather than bandwidth provided?”
 - a. ABAC members discussed the question, but did provide an answer since the response would hinge greatly on corporate business decisions.
 - b. A discussion of subsidies followed.
 - c. No conclusion reached on the issue.
8. Status from Policy Working Group – will meet within the next two weeks.
9. Status from Annual Report Working Group
 - a. Group discussed the presentation before the Joint Committee on Advanced Communications and Information Technology
 - 1) There still seems to be confusion about the separation of duties and responsibilities of ABAC and Connect Arkansas.
 - 2) It is important that the group’s message be presented to the members of this committee, but it is felt that a more one-on-one or small group presentation would be more beneficial.
 - 3) The Committee wants more updated information and would like to see the progress that ABAC has made. Therefore, the First Annual Report was promised for the fourth quarter of 2008 – hopefully, at the beginning of the quarter.
 - b. Wendy presented alternative methods of presenting ABAC’s annual message to the Governor and the General Assembly
 - 1) Executive Summary to provide suggested policies and overview of the research can be created first and soon.
 - 2) A fuller, more robust report to show the results of the group’s research can then be provided later as a reference piece.
 - 3) ABAC members will be asked to work on either the Executive Summary or the Research Report.
10. Time for public comment – none.
11. Discussion of possible ABAC legislation initiative – tabled.
12. Other matters of business – none.

Meeting was adjourned at 10.55 a.m.
Greg Ashcraft moved.
Wendy Wheeler seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Maryce J. Cunningham
Secretary